# Included from the Start in K-1 Classrooms!

# An Overview of SPECS First Year Implementation Data for the Include Me from the Start Initiative

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## BACKGROUND

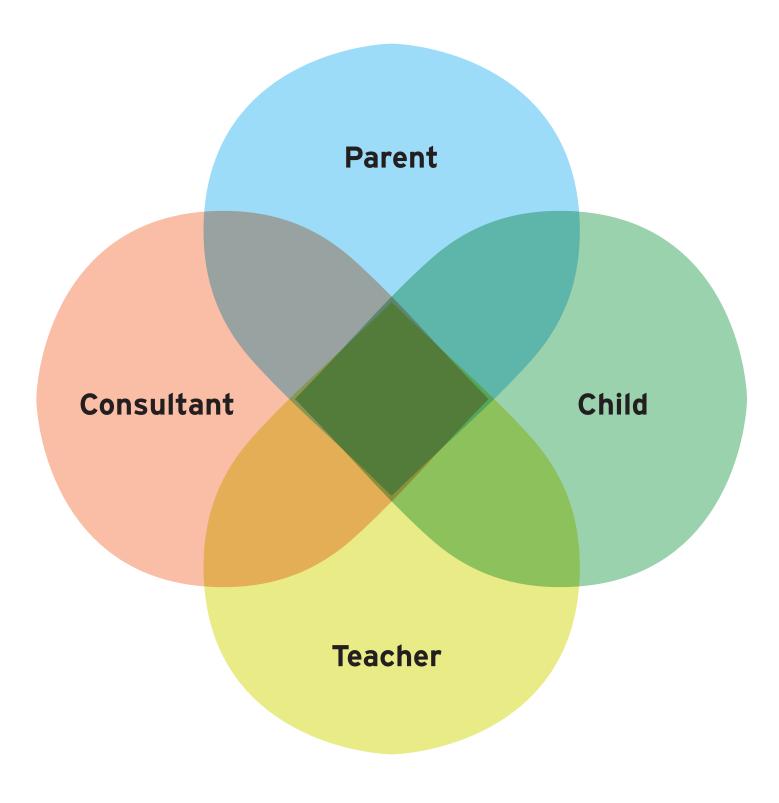
The Include Me from the Start (IMFS) initiative of the ARC of Pennsylvania is state funded by the PA Department of Education according to the Gaskins Settlement. The program seeks to provide high quality mentoring to receiving teachers, and adaptive programming in inclusive settings for close to 150 children a year with significant disabilities in Kindergarten and 1st grade.

Include Me from the Start proposes to:

- Include children early in Kindergarten and 1st grade to increase federally required inclusion outcomes for those children and decrease the likelihood that they will be segregated throughout their school-age years.
- Help build inclusion capacity within all school districts involved.

The program uses 15 consultants, employed by ARC , in order to train, mentor, and support teachers and parents in 30+ school districts per year with the provision of services to children with disabilities.

The program evaluation research of the Include Me from the Start initiative is designed to determine the impact and programmatic elements for successful inclusion of children with significant disabilities in public school kindergarten and first grade classrooms.



#### Include Me from the Start Quadrad

The IMFS Quadrad represents the key stakeholders involved in the initiative and highlights how each of their roles overlap to create direct and indirect effects within the quadrad.

# **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Do children show
improvements in
their classroom social
participation and prerequisite
learning skills as a result of
IMFS consultation on
classroom practices?

2 Does IMFS individual consultation result in changes in knowledge, attitudes, and classroom and school practices to benefit children with significant disabilities in grades K-1? 3 Does IMFS consultation result in changes in parent's attitudes and knowledge about inclusion?







# METHODOLOGY

## **Participants** (30 School Districts across the state of Pennsylvania)

#### Child Demographics

G	E	Ν	D	Ε	R

Male	••	••	•	••	•	• •	•	•	•	• •	•	•	. 72	%
Female	••	••	• •	••	• •	• •	•	•	•	• •	•	•	.28	%

#### RACE

Caucasian
African American 15%
Hispanic or Latino9%
Other 5%
Asian

#### GRADE LEVEL

Kindergarten (Half Day)	14%
Kindergarten (Full Day)3	38%
First Grade4	18%

#### DISABILITY CATEGORIES

#### EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT (Amount)

Itinerant Support ..... 52.2% Supplemental Support. 28.4% Full Time Support ..... 19.4%

#### EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT (TYPE)

Learning Support 55.2%
Autistic Support 20.7%
Life skills Support 13.8%
Emotional Support 6.9%
Deaf & Hearing
Impaired Support 3.4%

#### **Consultant Demographics**

#### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Associates Degree	13.3%
Bachelors Degree	33.4%
Masters Degree	26.8%
Juris Doctorate	13.3%

#### OTHER FACTORS

Mean Age	47.87
Mean Years of Experience	19.6
Teaching Experience	.26.7%
Parent of a Child with a Disability	80%

#### Teacher Demographics

#### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Bachelors Degree12	2%
Some Graduate Level Courses	2%
Masters Degree 66	5%

#### OTHER FACTORS

## Measures

PARTICIPANT	MEASURE				
Child	Demographic Form (1 time); SPECS for IMFS Child Progress & Learning Scale (2 times-pre/post); (ATEC, Rimland & Edelson, 1999)				
Teacher	Demographic Form (1 time); Teacher Perceptions Survey (2 times-pre/post) (Adapted from Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1997 and a review of relevant research); The Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) (2 times-pre/post) (ICP, Soukakou, 2010)				
Parent	Parent Perceptions Survey (2 times-pre/post) (Adapted from Palmer, Borthwick- Duffy, & Widaman, 1997 and a review of relevant research)				
Consultant	Demographic Form (1 time); SPECS for IMFS Consultation Monitor (ongoing)				

## METHODOLOGY (CONT.)

## Procedures

#### **Data Collection**

- All children and teachers were given identification numbers to maintain confidentiality.
- Demographic data was collected at the onset of the program implementation.
- Data using the primary measures (SPECS for IMFS Child Progress and Learning Scale, Teacher Perceptions Survey, Parent Perceptions Survey, Inclusive Classroom Profile) was collected twice during implementation.
- The Consultation Monitor was an ongoing measure collected by the consultant.

#### Data Collection: The Consultation Monitor

The consultants used the Consultation Monitor to record and track the activities they engaged in with members of the IMFS quadrad. This allowed the consultant to document and measure the consultation process: participants, time or intensity, modes used, strategies and activities.

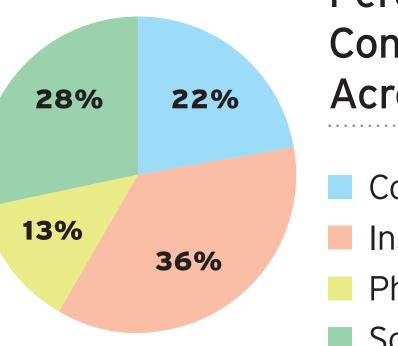
The Monitor was based on the Supplementary Aids and Services Toolkit and included the following:

- Categories: Collaborative, Instructional Physical, Social-Behavioral
- Strategies: Observing, Demonstration/ Modeling, Inclusion Goal Planning, Formal workshop, training, Written feedback, Collecting resources

# RESULTS

## **Perceptions Surveys**

ITEM	How strongly do you agree with the following	1234statement?Strongly AgreeStrongly Disagree
	<b>PARENT</b> Mean Range = 1.296-1.878	<b>TEACHER</b> Mean Range = 1.276-2.500
Highest Rated <i>M</i> Score	01. The more time my child spends in a regular classroom, the more likely he/she is to show educational benefits.	10. I feel I have a positive attitude toward having children with disabilities in the classroom.
Lowest Rated M Score	14. I understand my child's rights and education law.	5. A regular education classroom provides more meaningful and functional opportunities for a child to learn than does a special education classroom.



#### Percent Allocation of Consultation Activities Across Categories

	Collaboration 22%
36%	Instructional
	Physical
	Social

#### Percent Allocation of Consultation Activities Within Categories

#### COLLABORATIVE

Team Meetings	46.6%
Parent Meetings	29.6%
Professional Development	23.8%

#### INSTRUCTIONAL

Modifying Curriculum, Goals, Tests	.29.2%
Instruction on Functional Routines	. 32.7%
Presentation Methods and	
Instructional Adaptations	38.1%

#### PHYSICAL

Sensory Adjustments and	
Environmental Aids	41.1%
Furniture/Seating Arrangements	.26.3%
Adaptive Equipment, Structural Aids	. 32.7%

#### SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL

Social Skills Instruction	.24.9%
Behavior Plans, Expectations	.44.3%
Peer Supports, Co-operative	
Learning Strategies	.30.8%

## **Child Progress and Learning Scale**

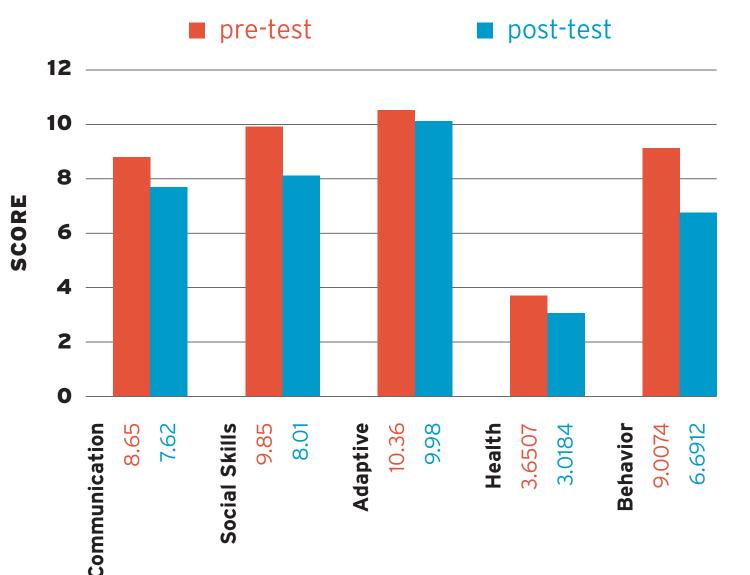
#### Look at the scale and please note that **the** *lower* **the scores, the BETTER!** Example questions:

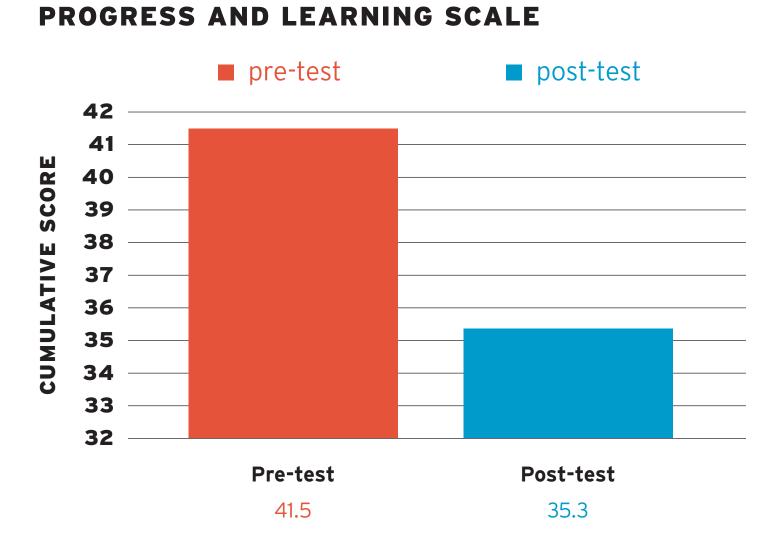
Asks meaningful questions
 2=not true, 1=somewhat true, 0=very true

Lacks friends, companions
 O=not true, 1=somewhat true, 2=very true

**OVERALL CHILD PROGRESS ON THE CHILD** 

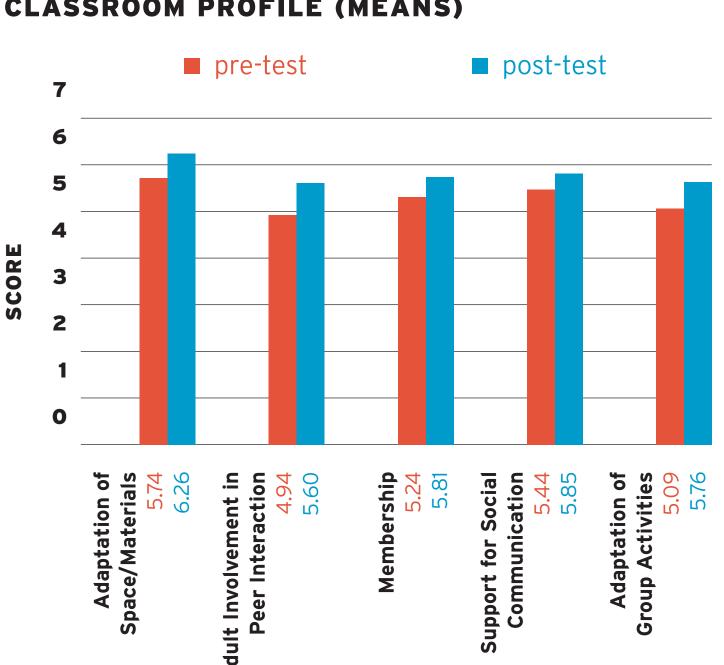
#### CHILD PROGRESS ON THE CHILD PROGRESS AND LEARNING SCALE





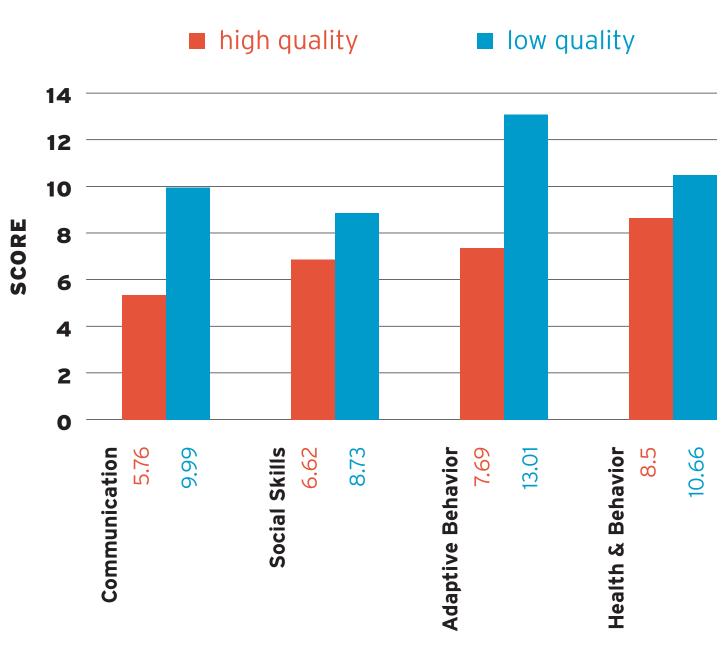
## Inclusive Classroom Profile

Please note that these graphs are **not** reversed scored, so **the** *higher* **the scores, the BETTER!** 



#### CLASSROOM GAINS ON THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM PROFILE (MEANS)

#### POST-TEST SCORES BY QUALITY OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICES



*Classrooms were placed into one of two groups based on ICP pre-test scores. Low Quality = 2.20 to 5.40, and High Quality = 5.60 to 7.00.* 

# CONCLUSIONS

#### Analysis of year one data demonstrated...

#### **Child Gains on Functional Skills**

According to the SPECS for IMFS Child Progress and Learning Scale, scores demonstrated improvement from pre-test to post-test in all areas measured (Communication, Social Skills, Adaptive, Health, and Behavior). Statistical significance was reached for the Social Skills, Health, and Behavior domains (p<.05). In addition, an overall improvement was demonstrated.

#### Improvements in Classroom Quality

Children in the High Quality classroom group demonstrated better post-test scores on the School Learning and Progress Scale than those in the Low Quality classroom group. Also, statistical significance was reached for the Communication and Adaptive domains (p<.05) on the SPECS for IMFS Child Progress and Learning Scale.